

INTRODUCTION

This monograph aims to chart the development of the moral regeneration campaign, and assess its relevance to the national crime prevention effort in South Africa. The campaign was initiated by former President Mandela in 1997, in an engagement with religious leaders from various faiths in South Africa. It has since taken on a variety of forms, and its messages have taken on political, religious and secular, ethical, and nation-building aspects. The campaign for moral regeneration, albeit difficult and diffuse, has been an interesting and unique effort in the context of crime prevention and the rebuilding of social fabric in post-apartheid South Africa.

While this monograph focuses on the moral regeneration campaign supported by the South African government, it is worth noting that there is a range of initiatives generated by NGOs that could also be described as contributing to moral regeneration. These include early childhood development and parenting-support interventions; restorative justice initiatives; various youth development programmes, especially those aimed at assisting teens with the rites of passage into adulthood; or projects which aim to divert and support young people who are at risk of involvement in crime. Elsewhere in the government sphere, efforts by the Revenue Service and by municipalities to encourage payment of taxes and service charges could also be described as contributing to the development of a new morality, but these will not be examined here.

This monograph will also focus on the crime preventive aspects of the moral regeneration initiative, noting that, although the campaign has been strongly focused on the reduction of criminality, this is not its only content. We are therefore not engaging with the full breadth of the campaign as it is currently evolving. It should be noted that the campaign is dynamic and changes direction and emphasis from time to time. This monograph should therefore only be taken as a reflection of developments up to the end of 2004.